

SUMMARY MEETING REPORT

Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee (MAFAC) Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force (CBP Task Force) *Via webinar – September 23, 2020*

OVERVIEW

The Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee (MAFAC) Columbia Basin Partnership (CBP) Task Force met via webinar on September 23, 2020. Barry Thom, Regional Administrator for the West Coast Region, Michael Tehan, Assistant Regional Administrator for the Interior Columbia Basin, and Heidi Lovett, Policy Analyst and MAFAC Assistant Designated Federal Officer, represented NOAA Fisheries leadership at the meeting.

Attendance included 27 CBP Task Force members (see *Appendix A* for list) representing Columbia River Basin (the basin) tribal and state sovereigns (including the states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington) and stakeholders throughout the basin.

Over the course of the meeting, CBP Task Force members discussed the following topics with each other and NOAA Fisheries staff:

- Welcome, Opening Remarks, Proposed Agenda, and Updates Around the Region
- Final Review Phase 2 Report
- Opportunity for Public Input
- Adoption of Phase 2 Report
- October MAFAC Report Out and Sharing CBP Partnership Products Around the Basin
- Moving Forward from the CBP Task Force Effort
- CBP Task Force Final Meeting Closing Remarks, and Celebration

This report summarizes the major meeting discussions, action items, and next steps for the CBP Task Force.

1. Welcome, Opening Remarks, Proposed Agenda, and Updates Around the Region

Barry Thom, NOAA Fisheries, Deb Nudelman, Kearns & West, Task Force Members

Barry Thom, NOAA Fisheries, welcomed the Task Force and thanked them for taking the time to join the webinar. He acknowledged the amount of work that has been done by the group over the past few years and his gratitude for the discussions the group has had and the challenging issues facing salmon recovery in the Northwest that they have tackled.

Deb Nudelman, Kearns & West (K&W), walked participants through the proposed agenda and meeting logistics. The agenda topics included updates around the region, a final review of the Phase 2 Report, an opportunity for public input, adoption of the Phase 2 Report, updates on the October MAFAC report out, and efforts toward moving forward from the CBP Task Force effort.

2. Updates Around the Region

Deb Nudelman, K&W, Task Force Members

Deb Nudelman, K&W, asked Task Force members to share updates that are relevant to the Task Force process.

Many members shared their appreciation for the work the group has accomplished as well as acknowledging the challenges many Task Force members are facing due to COVID-19 and the regional wildfires.

Scott Hauser, Upper Snake River Tribes Foundation, gave an update on the Idaho Governor's Salmon Working Group (Salmon Working Group). The group is moving towards the finish line and has recently broken into subgroups with the goal of developing recommendations for the four H's, predation, monitoring and valuation, and economic factors. Based on the recommendation, the Salmon Working Group will determine the impact, determine if there is consensus and the feasibility of the policy recommendation, and most importantly the effects of those policy recommendations on increasing the abundance of salmon and steelhead in Idaho.

Joel Kawahara, Coastal Trollers Association, stated he is thankful for the Task Force members and for how far the process has gone. He noted that there were significantly cooler ocean conditions this year on much of the West Coast and that his observations showed increase in phytoplankton, which is a great sign for conditions two to three years down the road.

BJ Kieffer, Spokane Tribe, noted it is bittersweet that the Task Force cannot be in the same room, and the harder push is still to come for the group.

Steve Manlow, Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board, stated that his organization just wrapped up a grant funding round and ended up with about 8.8 million dollars in projects in the Columbia Basin. The regions are still working with NOAA fisheries on the five-year status review and are also working with the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office on updating the statewide salmon recovery strategy.

Deb Marriott, Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership, stated the Columbia River Basin Restoration Act has been funded, and the first grants were released by the EPA this week. She added that the Steigerwald restoration project is underway, the Highway 14 project piece has been completed, Gibbons Creek has been moved to add flood walls and they are about to start construction of the east/west levy.

Liza Jane McAlister, 6 Ranch, Inc., noted the Wallowa River is full of water this year and the latest surveys show more redds than they have ever had.

Guy Norman, Northwest Power and Conservation Council, Washington, gave an update on indicators, stating that Sockeye returned over 300,000 to the basin compared to 60,000 last year, which leading to increased Coho and Chinook runs this fall. Seeing this turnaround is a positive indicator.

Patty O'Toole, Northwest Power and Conservation Council, noted the council is in the final stages of wrapping up the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Amendment. In one of the sections, the council adopted goals and objectives for a variety of species in the Columbia Basin and part of that incarnates the work of the Partnership.

Zach Penney, Columbia Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC), noted CRITFC has acquired the Center for Coastal Margin Observation & Prediction (CMOP) that does work in the Columbia estuary.

Kevin Scribner, Salmon Safe, stated the Columbia River Basin Restoration Act grant program awarded Salmon Safe a grant for the next two years to support their work. He also noted that the organization will be shifting to Trout Safe in the basin.

3. Final Review of Phase 2 Report

Katherine Cheney, NOAA Fisheries

Katherine Cheney, NOAA Fisheries, walked through the main components and table of contents of the Phase 2 Report, which included the following:

- Executive Summary
- Overview of Partnership Process and Progress
- Key Messages and Recommendations
- Qualitative Goals
- Quantitative Goals
- Biological Analyses
- Social, Cultural, Economic, and Ecological Considerations
- Scenarios
- Range of Strategies for Regional Consideration
- Path Forward Recommendations

Deb Nudelman added that there is a comment tracking sheet that contains all of the content that had been added or changed in the document since the July Task Force Meeting. She noted Task Force members' willingness to disagree created a stronger work product.

There were no comments from Task Force members.

4. Public Comment

Deb Nudelman, Kearns & West

Deb Nudelman invited any members of the public to provide input.

There was no public comment provided.

5. Adoption of the Phase 2 Report

Barry Thom, NOAA Fisheries, Deb Nudelman, K&W

Barry Thom introduced the next section of the agenda, the adoption of the Phase 2 Report. Barry stated it has been a huge effort to create a report that has both a solid technical foundation as well as important SCEE

considerations. The Task Force is at the point of making sure that everyone is in agreement and there is consensus on moving the report forward.

Deb Nudelman reminded the group how much work and cooperation went into creating the Phase 2 Report. She thanked the NOAA Fisheries and regional technical teams that helped lead the process with sound science. She then instructed the group to remain silent if they are in alignment and believe the final report is ready to transmit to MAFAC for adoption.

Task Force members provided the following comments:

Jim McKenna, Governor Brown's Natural Resources Office, Oregon, stated the State of Oregon is supportive of the document. He noted that the state recognizes how complex the issues are, especially considering the size of the Columbia River Basin. The State of Oregon sees a few sentences that they would maybe change, such as highlighting the need for urgency, but the State understands understand this is one point in a long continuum and urges other members to recognize that as well.

Zach Penney, CRITFC, stated the Nez Perce Tribe supports the Phase 2 Report moving forward and noted he has not heard from the Warm Springs Tribe regarding their support. Zach stated that as a primary participant for four tribes, he is comfortable with the report but explained that there are still a many members concerned about how the report will be utilized. The quantitative goals serve as a rallying point for that destination and achieving those high-end goals would be an outstanding place to get to. The report also serves as a regional talking point that sovereigns and stakeholders can use to put pressure on decision makers to help enact the changes the group wants to see. He also mentioned that the report's evolution into the four states' governance process provides a good roadmap to move forward.

Brent Hall, Umatilla Tribes, stated the Phase 2 Report is making its way through the commissions and processes at Umatilla so he cannot give an official response but will stay in touch.

Justin Hayes, Idaho Conservation League, noted that he supports a majority of the Phase 2 Report but cited concerns regarding utilization of the heatmap. Justin explained that is still deciding whether to provide a letter to highlight his concerns but did confirm that he is not blocking the report from going forward.

Bill Bosch, Yakama Nation Fisheries, stated he was sitting in for David Blodgett and explained he could not speak for Yakama Nation from a policy standpoint. He noted that Yakama Nation has seen encouraging Sockeye returns and that he will work with David to get the group a more formal answer on transmitting the report.

Barry Thom wrapped up the discussion by explaining his understanding that no Task Force member had blocked consensus for the report to move forward. He stated the NOAA Fisheries project team will proceed with the caveat that if tribal representatives want to block consensus of the report between now and the formal recommendation, they can do so, but his assumption is the report will continue to move forward.

Katherine Cheney, NOAA Fisheries, noted in Phase 1 in of the Partnership, some of the tribal governments submitted letters of support and it is helpful for MAFAC to hear from individual members and representatives, but it is not a requirement. NOAA has received letters from the State of Montana and one from the port representatives. The letters of support will be bundled included with the Phase 2 Report to MAFAC. NOAA is asking for any letters to be summited by October 2nd.

6. October MAFAC Report Out and Sharing CBP Partnership Products Around the Basin

Heidi Lovett, NOAA Fisheries

Heidi Lovett, NOAA Fisheries, provided details for NOAA's report out to MAFAC in October. She stated that the MAFAC meeting is scheduled for October 20th and 21st, 2020. The CBP Phase 2 Report will be presented to MAFAC on October 20th from 10:15 am – 12:15 pm PT. The presentation will be 40 minutes followed by 20 minutes for Q&A. Heidi noted that four Task Force members, including Jennifer Anders, Paul Arrington, Scott Hauser, and Jim McKenna, will present the report along with Barry Thom. After the presentation, MAFAC will transmit the report to the leads of NOAA Fisheries and there will be a roll out to share the information more widely as was done in Phase 1.

Katherine Cheney, NOAA Fisheries, stated NOAA Fisheries has received a few requests to provide additional briefings in the coming months and is looking for Task Force volunteers to assist with those briefings. Additionally, NOAA Fisheries is creating an outreach package to help members communicate the work done by the Task Force. Finally, the report and related materials will continue to be housed on MAFAC's website.

7. Moving Forward from the CBP Task Force Effort

Barry Thom, NOAA Fisheries

Barry Thom, NOAA Fisheries, invited members of the Task Force to provide additional perspectives for moving forward. Barry stated nothing will happen as a result of this process unless the Task Force works to implement strategies toward achieving the goals.

Task Force members shared the following reflections, comments, and questions on the draft Scenarios Chapter:

- One member suggested a sibling format, with a quasi-governmental entity joined by a non-profit. The two would work alongside each other.
- Another member stated they would like to see NOAA Fisheries retain their leadership role. They stated the scope of a new group scope can be different but the way the Task Force was structured enabled the kind of participation that resulted in quality products.
- A member stated while some fish runs are doing well this year, not all stocks are giving promising signals. A lot of attention and focus is on these issues have right now, this region is keenly focused on these issues and the situation is urgent. It is important that NOAA Fisheries have some role moving forward.
- Another member noted the Task Force is a great group of diverse perspectives. Recovering these important fish species will take everyone.

Next, Guy Norman, Northwest Power and Conservation Council, Washington, gave an update on the progress the States of Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Oregon have made to advance the goals of the Partnership. He explained the goal of the states is to advance the Partnership goals and link that to existing structures and processes in the region, while maintaining the stakeholder input and the collaborative momentum the Task Force has established. The states have a draft framework for how the new effort would be structured, and have conducted outreach to federal entities, tribal governments, and stakeholders. Based on the initial feedback, the states have slowed down on working on details of the structure and are now focused on a letter of agreement for the four states' governors to sign. The letter would commit the states to working with partners for the rest of the year to work on the details of the framework and scope of work associated with a process which will hopefully be implemented by early next year. Additionally, the governors have also received a letter from an environmental utility group asking them to lead an effort to move forward

with salmon and steelhead recovery with principles that include goals for salmon and other interests including economic interests, energy inserts and tribal treaty rights and culture. The Partnership effort is front and center.

Jim McKenna, Governor Brown's Natural Resources Office, Oregon, added the overall objective is for the four states to help develop a process, not for them to come out with an edict. The states want to continue the collaborative and cooperative process with the objective of meeting the goals of the Partnership. From the state of Oregon's perspective, the governor has been clear that diversity and equity is to be woven into every piece of work and the state is committed to that.

Jennifer Anders, Northwest Power and Conservation Council, Montana, stated in the next three months the states hope to work with the region to outline a process to set the table for a dialogue with a long term vision for planning while taking seriously the need for urgency.

Jim Yost, Northwest Power and Conservation Council, Idaho, added when the states started this process, they were pressured to start the process sooner rather than later, resulting in the states jumping the gun. The states decided to regroup to get the executives' permission to proceed with putting it together. The states need to do more outreach to the tribes and then need to talk to the advocates and other stakeholders that are out there. The states will not do memorandum of understanding (MOU), or anything else, until all of that is worked out.

Task Force members provided the following comments and questions:

- A member asked if federal agencies such as Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, and Fish and Wildlife Service will be involved?
 - Mike Edmondson, Idaho Governor's Office of Species Conservation, responded that the states have had some discussions about the role of regulatory agencies but will continue to talk to them as everything is on the table.
- Another member noted sometimes, when more agencies come to the table it can soften or eliminate the other voices at the table.
- A member asked, how much will other ongoing processes in the basin be incorporated in the next process?
 - Jennifer Anders responded the states are still working through that question. It is not the states' intent to duplicate efforts that are ongoing or just starting.
 - Guy Norman responded the states' discussions have been about bringing forward the Partnership's DNA in terms of the vision and goals, but there is also a recognition that as the effort moves into an implementation phase there are linkages to other processes, some of which are affiliated with state legislation, federal legislation, court orders, tribal plans, etc. One of the challenges is how does this group gain an understanding of what is going on with those processes.
- Another member asked, what the timeline is for the signing of the letter by the four governors?
 - Jim McKenna stated the letter of intent is currently being reviewed and the states are aiming to have it ready within weeks.
- A member asked, how long the proposed forum would continue?
 - Jim McKenna responded the goal is to implement the process over several years and see how productive it is. The group will have annual meetings and a five-year review and will constantly be evaluating how productive the effort is. The goals for the fish are long-term, so if this is value added they see the group continuing into the future.

- Another member noted they hope one key function of the next process is integration with other efforts.
- A member reflected on past processes they had been a part of where the action agencies educated and advised to help the other entities at the table make decisions.
- A member stated that they had heard an MOU would be signed by the states by September 30th.
 - Jim McKenna explained it is strictly a letter of intent stating the states have a skeleton of a process but have permission to continue to work with all partners, including the tribes, to develop the process.
- Another member stated there is still confusion about what the states are proposing and what is almost finalized.
 - Guy Norman stated originally, the states were working on an MOU for the governors to sign, but with the input that was received from a number of folks, in particular tribes, they decided to slow that down and move to a letter of intent. The letter of intent would direct staff, with the endorsement of the four governors, to work with tribes and others to develop a framework and the components of an MOU.
- Members asked additional questions regarding clarification around the status of an MOU and whether federal agencies had been involved in draft one.
 - Jim McKenna stated there was a skeleton idea that was put down on paper, but it was so preliminary that there was no formal proposal presented to federal agencies and no back and forth negotiations.
- A member asked if these conversations would make it to the desks of the congressional delegations of the states?
 - Jim McKenna responded he keeps the delegation of Oregon apprised but that the letter of intent strictly among the four governors.
 - Jennifer Anders stated the intention is to talk to federal delegation as they get input.

Deb Nudelman, Kearns & West, wrapped up the discussion, stating that the conversation was very important and helpful. She then went over the next steps in the process, specifically that after the meeting the final Phase 2 Report will be transmitted to MAFAC, which wraps up the formal piece of the designated Task Force. The Kearns & West and NOAA Fisheries teams are available and can set up some regular calls for the members will want to start thinking about how to stay in touch and how to move forward from here.

8. CBP Task Force Final Meeting Closing Remarks and Celebration

Deb Nudelman, Kearns & West

Deb Nudelman, Kearns & West, invited Task Force members to reflect on the CBP process. She stated the group will be leaving legacy for generations to come. She asked the group to go around the table and spend a few minutes each reflection on where they have been, where they are, and where they are going.

Task Force Member responses included the following:

- A member stated the group has a lot of science and instruments, but that there is more wisdom to come. They encouraged the group to be strong and courageous and reminded them that the gift they can bestow on each other and to salmon is to stand up and stand together as they are out in public.
- Another member reflected the process has become about more than just establishing quantitative goals -- it has been a rallying point for the basin. The SCEE piece, being able to walk in everyone's shoes, has been one of the more important parts. The member noted they do not think there are issues in the basin because of poor fish management, these are historical things the basin is trying to

correct, and society will have to adapt. The constituencies represented on this Task Force are an important part of this. The Phase 2 Report contains many opportunities for this group.

- A member encouraged the group to keep listening, keep talking, and keep learning about each other and the different aspects of Columbia River salmon.
- Another member reflected the actual planning for this group started over four years ago. It has been successful and along the way the group has broadened their view and respect for the basin and for the tribal culture and tribal rights. They showed their appreciation for all the work that Barry Thom and his staff did as well as the technical team and Ray Beamesderfer, who worked with very detailed science and turned it into something everyone can understand.
- Another member also thanked the NOAA Fisheries and Kearns & West teams. They stated they always walk away from these meetings knowing more than when it started, which gives them optimism that the right people are at the table. Their entity's goal is to get to the point where there is abundant, harvestable, native salmon and steelhead throughout the basin.
- A member stated one of their overarching motivations is to leave the places better than how they found them, and this group has inspired them to do that.
- A member reflected they have been a part of a lot of processes in the basin and this one has been the most rewarding, in a lot of respects due to the people involved. One thing that stands out is the shift in focus from complying with legal mandates to taking the time to get to know each other and hear each other and solving multiple problems.
- Another member stated there have been so many efforts in the last decades and what this brought was a unification through the basin and bringing together disparate pieces that will sustain this effort more than past ventures. The group also needs to add new and younger leaders and make sure everyone at the table takes the responsibility to bring in other voices.
- A member noted the group has accomplished important things, including a unified basin plan, which hasn't been done before.
- A member stated this forum has provided an opportunity to forge some strong working relationships and build trust with those around the table, which will allow the process to move towards successful implementation.
- Another member stated forming this vision and having a group of people unify around it is very important. The next step, a call to action, is where it will be important to sell the vision to everyone in the basin.
- A member noted it has been a pleasure working with the group and stated that there is a lot of hard work to be done. They expressed that they wish this group would have been here 78 years ago but are now in a better place to have the tough discussions.
- A member mentioned for the public to participate, it will be vital for entities and agencies to weigh in.
- Another member thanked the NOAA Fisheries and Kearns & West teams and reflected on the opportunity to spend time with people from around the basin with different ideas, which has been important and enriching as a person and professional. One of the other real values are the many things that are happening that are being affected by the process, like this like the Idaho Governor's Salmon Work Group. There is a lot of learning that has taken place here that had been used in other places.
- A member noted the continuity the group has seen over the last three years is a testimony to how well the group has worked together.

- Another member stated there will be a need for economic stimulus, so the groups need to get these projects' shovel ready. They also reflected this is bittersweet, but they hope they can look back and see this as the springboard to the next thing.
- A member noted they are a little concerned and interested to see what happens with respect to the Columbia River Environmental Impact Statement. They hope the efforts of this group will continue and they don't see parties retreating to their corners.
- Another member noted how there are so many different parties and players, but everyone is getting along, and they want to applaud that.
- A member stated it was an honor to get to be a part of the Task Force and expand their understanding by learning from other members and hearing their stories.
- Another member stated the Task Force has benefited them personally. They have enjoyed the interactions, the outpouring of compassion, and different perspectives. They noted they think the Basin is collaborating more than ever and they look forward to building on this.
- A member noted this process is exactly how society, regarding many different issues, is going to succeed.
- Another member stated the group wrote something with great historical value. They hope 50 years from now, whoever will carry forward the work will say the Task Force did great work.
- A member mentioned there is still a lot of work to do and one of the biggest problems they see is education and information, as a lot of people know one aspect of the basin but they don't know all of it and it all needs to fit together.
- Another member noted the transition into getting the executive branch to actualize the goals laid out in the plan will be the important thing and hopefully people can help move that forward.
- A member reflected on all of the Task Force members who are no longer part of the Partnership but helped get the process to this point. Specifically, Bert Bowler, Tony Grover, Kirsten Meira, and Randy Friedlander.
- Another member stated they have admired the knowledge, dedication, and work ethic of the Task Force members. Everyone has been so thoughtful and the passion shines through.

Barry Thom, wrapped up the meeting, stating that he has been working on this process for over a decade. The Partnership has demonstrated that humankind does have a chance and can come to common agreement. This effort has been a lot of work, but it's just a small piece of what needs to happen. The group has created a good vision, but it is now necessary to get to implementation and move this forward. He thanked the group for everything they have done and noted that this process has been the most rewarding part of his career and that he couldn't have asked for a better group of people to work with.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:30 pm.

Meeting Materials
The meeting materials can be found on the NOAA Fisheries CBP Task Force website here: https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/partners/columbia-basin-partnership-task-force